

REMARKS

Claims 8-10 and 14-19 are pending. Claims 1-7 and 11-13 have been canceled as being directed to non-elected subject matter without prejudice to the filing of the same or similar claims in a related application. Claim 8 has been amended to include the previously implied feature of the nozzles introducing starting material into the molding chambers. Claim 9 has been amended to clarify the meaning of "cold" as being relative to the heated reservoir. The temperature relationship is described in the paragraph bridging pages 59 and 60. Claims 14-17 are new. Support for claims 14 and 15 is found on page 62, lines 11-17, which provides that the starting material is injected and molding is done as the molding chambers and nozzles rotate. Support for new claims 16 to 19 is found on page 58, lines 9-12 and lines 20-25. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner rejects claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,672,364 ("Kato et al."). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The present invention is directed to an apparatus for molding substrates from a starting material in flowable form. The apparatus includes a plurality of molding chambers that are aligned with a plurality of nozzles for feeding starting material. The molding chambers and nozzles are mounted on a rotor that rotates about a central axis. The nozzles are displaceable in a direction parallel to said central axis. Furthermore, as the rotor rotates, the nozzles engage and disengage said molding chambers.

Kato discloses and describes a tablet press. Powder is fed from a single, stationary hopper into filling holes on a first table. The powder is then transferred into mold cavities in a second table. The powder is compressed in the mold cavity to produce the desired mold.

Kato does not disclose a plurality of nozzles for feeding starting material into aligned molding chambers. Additionally, Kato does not disclose or suggest the combination of molding chambers and nozzles mounted on a common or shared rotor that rotates about a central axis. Since Kato does not disclose nozzles, Kato could not disclose an apparatus having nozzles that are displaceable in a direction parallel to the central axis or the feature of

having nozzles engage and disengage molding chambers as the rotor rotates. For all of the above reasons, Applicants submit that the Kato fails to anticipate the instantly claimed invention. Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw his anticipation rejection of claim 8 in view of Kato.

The Examiner rejects claims 8 and 9 as being unpatentable over Kato in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,276,917 (“Gutierrez et al.”). The Examiner cites Gutierrez as showing heating of a reservoir to aid in compression of tablets. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The primary reference fails to disclose a number of essential elements of the claimed apparatus. Gutierrez does not address any of these shortcomings. Applicants note that the reference contemplates heating the powder inside a conditioning chamber prior to a pelletizing step. The resulting pellets are then cooled. See figure 2. Claim 9 provides for a heated reservoir that supplies the starting material directly to the nozzles. The claim further provides that the molding chambers are at a temperature below that of the heated reservoir. Hence, Gutierrez fails to disclose a heated reservoir as claimed. Consequently, even assuming that the references could be combined in the manner suggested by the Examiner, the resulting combination fails to disclose or suggest the claimed apparatus. Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw his obviousness rejection of claims 8 and 9 in view of Kato and Gutierrez.

The Examiner rejects claim 10 as being unpatentable over Kato in combination with Gutierrez and further in combination with U.S. Patent No. 5,429,484 (“Honda et al.”). The Examiner cites Honda as showing a valve in a flow path from a reservoir where liquid is sucked back upon closing of the valve. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Kato fails to disclose: 1) a plurality of nozzles aligned with molding chambers; 2) molding chambers and nozzles mounted on a common or shared rotor that rotates about a central axis; 3) an apparatus having nozzles that are displaceable in a direction parallel to the central axis; or 4) the feature of having nozzles engage and disengage molding chambers as the rotor rotates. The secondary reference does not address these shortcomings and, in fact, fails to disclose or suggest the use of a reservoir that supplies the starting material directly to the nozzles. Honda does not provide the missing elements from the preceding rejections.

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Applicants further submit that the Examiner has improperly selected bits of the prior art using hindsight knowledge of the claimed invention to arrive at the claimed invention. In the absence of any motivation for the combinations urged by the Examiner, Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw his obviousness rejection of claim 10 in view of Kato, Gutierrez and Honda.

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. The Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned representative in the event minor amendments will further prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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